

Exploring educational options

Choosing your GCSEs

Task: Read the statements below, tick YES or NO if you think they are good reasons to pick a subject at GCSE or not.

Once you have finished check the end of the page for answers.

- Do you choose subjects you enjoy and are good at? YES / NO
- Should you take a subject because your friends are? YES / NO
- Should you be choosing a subject because you like the teacher? YES / NO
- If you aren't sure what you want to do in the future, would choosing a mix of subjects be a good idea? YES / NO
- Do you choose GCSEs that will lead you to the right career for you? YES / NO

What else should you consider when choosing your GCSEs

When choosing your GCSEs, it's good to ask yourself some of the questions below:

Do I need certain GCSEs for the job / course I want to do?

What is it that I enjoy?

What are my priorities for the future?

Do I want to earn lots of money?

Do I want to make the world a better place?

Do I want to learn a trade such as carpentry?

Am I choosing this because it gets me to where I want to be?

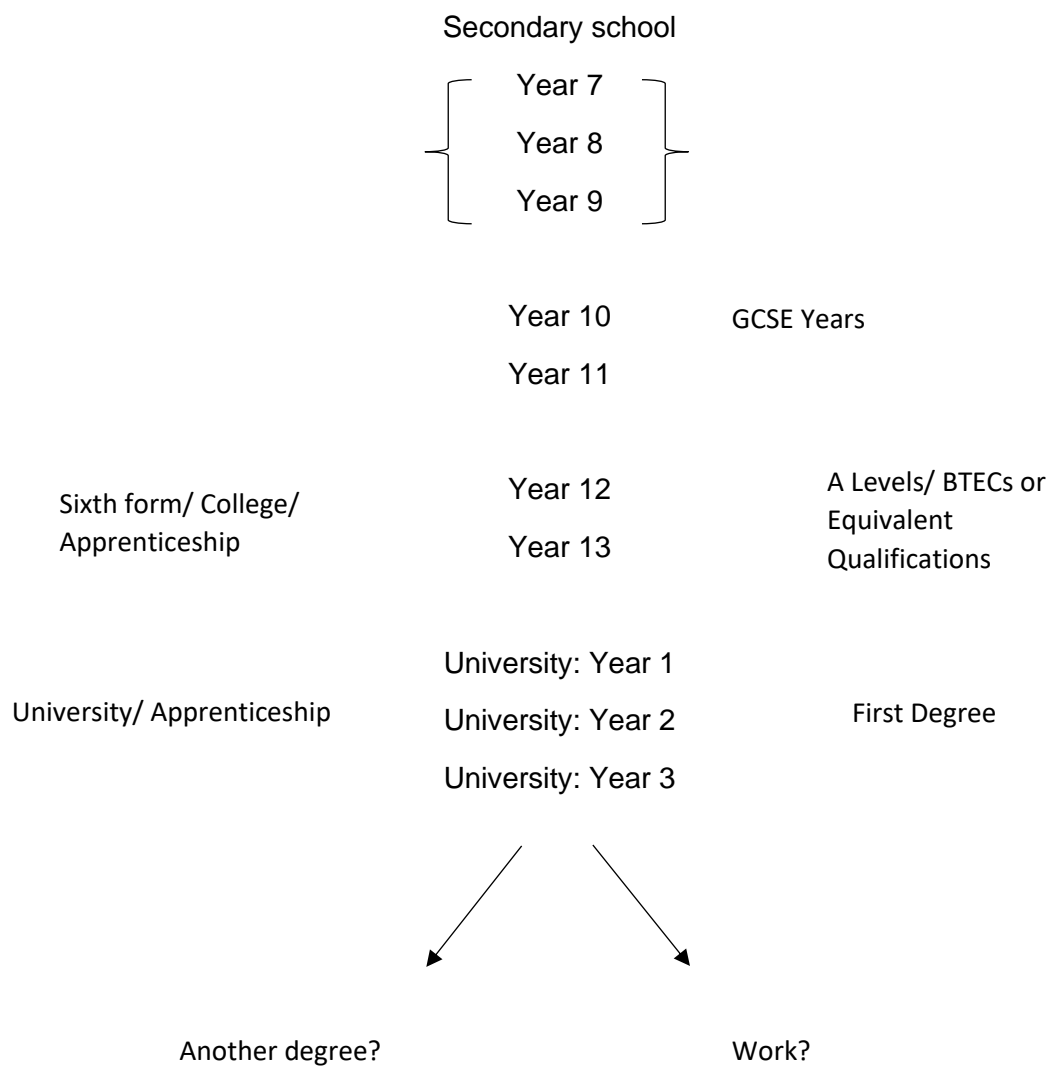
Only you know the answers to those questions. It's a good idea to start planning now, it is not too early to start thinking about what you may want to do in the future.

Your educational journey

The diagram below shows where you are on the education system.

Right now, as you know, you are either in year 7, 8 or 9 and have to remain in education until you are 18.

Start thinking about the subjects you would like to study at GCSE. The best way to do this is by completing the career tree activity on the next page. This will help you to identify your strengths, skills, goals and your inspiration.



Career Tree

There are lots of different methods you could use when it comes to planning your career effectively, but an easy way to approach the subject is to use the four simple steps below:

Leaves: Your goals

Do you have a particular career in mind or have an area that you might like to work in?

Branches: Your Pathway, Education and experience

Do you want / need to go to uni?



Trunk: Your strengths

What are you good at?

Roots: What is it that inspires you?

E.g. Do you want to help people?
Do you want to earn a lot of money?

Task:

- Your task is to complete the career tree activity below
- Think about what truly inspires and influences you, what your strengths are, what you want to do and how you might get there
- Try to list at least 2 points for each box
- Don't worry if you don't have all of the answers as this activity will help you investigate where you want to be in the future

**Leaves: Your goals
and achievements**

**Branches: Your pathway –
Education and experience**



Trunk: Your strengths

**Roots: What is it that inspires
you?**

Do universities look at your GCSE grades?

Absolutely universities look at your GCSE grades when deciding whether to offer you a place there.

Why?

They do this because when the majority of young people apply to university, they don't have their final A-level or BTEC grades yet, so the universities use them as an indicator as to how well you may do

Also, some universities need you to have specific GCSE grades to get onto their courses.

Time to research:

If you have some access to the web, have a look at what options may be best for you. If you have no clue what it is that you want to do, the national careers website may be a good place to start. It has information about a lot of different jobs, for example salaries, if you need any specific grades/qualifications.

www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Career Planner

Career Planner matches your skills, motivations and desires to a career that's perfect for you. Try the job match:

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner>

Self-discovery and reflection

Take the Buzz Quiz to develop self-awareness and start thinking about careers. This fun, quick quiz can help you explore your strengths and preferences and explore links between your personality, working styles and job types.

<https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>

Career ideas

Explore videos to get an insight into careers and work, and draw links between subjects and jobs. There are over 1000 videos of real people talking about their careers – explaining their job role, career path and how different factors have shaped their choices. Videos can be filtered by job type or subject and cover a range of sectors and levels.

<https://icould.com/explore/>

Career guides

Visit Career paths for guides and articles exploring issues at different career stages and decision points. These include GCSE options or university choices; exams and revision; and finding/ applying for jobs.

<https://icould.com/explore/#careerpaths>

Choosing your GCSEs

ANSWERS

Do you choose subjects you enjoy and are good at?

Yes! There's no point in choosing a subject that you really don't enjoy. It will mean that you will have to work a lot harder to get a good grade. If you enjoy it then it will be easier to study it because you will be more interested in the content.

Should you take a subject because your friends are?

Definitely don't choose whatever your friends are choosing just because they are taking them. Choose the subjects that are right for you.

Should you be choosing a subject because you like the teacher?

Don't choose a subject just because you like the teacher – what happens if they leave?

If you aren't sure what you want to do in the future, would choosing a mix of subjects be a good idea?

It might be a good idea to keep a spread of GCSEs if you are undecided about what you want to do so that you don't limit your options, but again, make sure these are subjects you are interested in.

Do you choose GCSEs that will lead you to the right career for you? YES / NO

If you know what you want to do when you are older, then think about what subjects you should be taking to get there – the National Careers Service website will be able to help with this.